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CHAPTER IV.

OF THE ANCIENT AND UNIVERSAL METHODS OF DISFIGURING THE PERSON.

MANY Europeans spoil their beauty by eagerly imitating foreign customs, and always seeking new methods of adorning their persons. The Abipones disfigure and render themselves terrible to the sight from a too great attachment to the old customs of their ancestors; by whose example they mark their faces in various ways, some of which are common to both sexes, others peculiar to the women. They prick their skin with a sharp thorn, and scatter fresh ashes on the wound, which infuse an ineffaceable black dye. They all wear the form of a cross impressed on their foreheads, and two small lines at the corner of each eye extending towards the ears, besides four transverse lines at the root of the nose between the eye-brows, as national marks. These figures the old women prick with thorns, not only in the skin, but in the live flesh, and ashes sprinkled on them whilst streaming with blood render them of an indelible black. What these figures signify, and what they portend I cannot tell, and the Abipones themselves

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304 are no better informed on the subject. They only know that this custom was handed down to them from their ancestors, and that is sufficient.

[531] I saw not only a cross marked on the foreheads of all the Abipones, but likewise black crosses woven in the red woollen garments of many. It is a very surprizing circumstance that they did this before they were acquainted with the religion of Christ, when the signification and merits of the cross were unknown to them. Perhaps they learnt some veneration for the cross, or gained an idea of its possessing great virtues from their Spanish captives, or from those Abipones who had lived in captivity amongst the Spaniards.

The Abiponian women, not content with the marks common to both sexes, have their face, breast, and arms covered with black figures of various shapes, so that they present the appearance of a Turkish carpet. The higher their [554] rank, and the greater their beauty, the more figures they have; but this savage ornament is purchased with much blood and many groans. As soon as a young woman is of age to be married she is ordered to be marked according to 304 881 custom. She reclines her head upon the lap of an old woman, and is pricked in order to be beautified. Thorns are used for a pencil, and

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Turkey carpet, worthy of noblemen's houses in Europe. The loom and the instruments of which it consists are confined to a few reeds and sticks. The American women seem to have a natural talent for making various useful articles. They can mould pots and jugs of various forms of clay, not with the assistance of a turning machine, like potters, but with their hands alone. These clay vessels they bake, not in an oven, but out of doors, placing sticks round them. They cannot glaze them with lead, but they first dye them of a red colour, and then rub them with a kind of glue to make them shine. There is never any snow, and very little frost, in the region inhabited by the Abipones: but when the South wind blows hard, the air becomes very piercing, and sometimes intolerably so to persons thinly clad. The Abipones shield themselves from the cold with a cloak made of otters' skins. This garment, which is likewise square, is laboriously and elegantly made by the women: whose business it is to strip off the skins of the otters, after they have been caught by dogs, and then fix them to the ground with very slender pegs, that they may not wrinkle. After being dried, they are painted red, in square lines like a dice box. The Indian women cannot dress hides like cur-

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of wooden gauntlets. The quiver is made of rushes, and adorned with woollen threads of various colours. The arrows, which are an ell and a palm in length, consist of a reed, to which a sharp point of bone, very hard wood, or iron is prefixed. Wooden points are more formidable than iron ones, but those of bone, which are made of a fox's leg, are the most to be dreaded of all; for they break in being extracted, and the part remaining in the body causes a swelling, and a very virulent ulcer, which leaves the wounded person no rest. Any wood, from being imbued with a kind of native poison, causes more pain and tumour than iron. The Abipones never poison their arrows, as is usual amongst many other people of America. The Chiquitos are dreaded by the neighbouring savages on this account, that if an arrow of theirs wound the outermost skin, and bring the least drop of blood, all the limbs will swell, and in the course of a few hours death will ensue. The deadly poison in which they dip their arrows, the Chiquitos, alone know how to prepare from the bark of an unknown tree, and to this day they reserve to themselves the knowledge of the cruel mystery. In hunting too they kill wild animals with arrows dipped in the same poison, and cutting out the wounded part of the body, eat them with safety,

A 411 [531]
A [237]
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CHAPTER XXXVIII.

BY WHAT MEANS THE ABIPONES RENDER THEMSELVES FORMIDABLE, AND WHEN THEY ARE JUSTLY TO BE DREADED.

NATURALLY fearful, they render themselves formidable by art. They make up for the want of native bravery by the noise of their trumpets, the craftiness of their ambuscades, by their astonishing swiftness, their painted faces, and many-coloured plumes. They adorn their heads with feathers of various birds, either erected like a crest, or bearing the appearance of a crown. They paint their faces sometimes white or red, but more commonly black. Soot, scraped from pans and kettles, is generally used for this purpose. In travelling, when soot is not to be got, they make a fire, and use its smoke and ashes to paint themselves with. The fruit of the tree Urucuy furnishes them with materials for a red paint: but on sudden occasions they prick their tongues with a thorn, and daub their faces with the blood that flows plenteously from the wound. They do not all paint in the same pattern. Some darken the forehead only, some one cheek, and some both. Some streak the whole face with

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714 spiral lines; others only make two circles round
302 the eyes; and others again blacken the whole
• 531 of the face. This custom is common to many
[171] other nations of Paraguay, especially the equestrian ones.

534 The Abipones render themselves formidable
726 to the eyes, as well as to the ears of their enemies; for they prelude every battle with trumpets, flutes, horns, and clarions, differing in sound, materials, and form. The horn instruments bellow, the wooden ones clatter, and those of bone, which are made of the leg of some large bird or quadruped, emit a very shrill whistle, while those of reeds have a ridiculous creaking sound. Others again, consisting of the tail of the armadillo, to which a reed is prefixed, fill the whole air, to a great distance, with a horrible roaring. I want words to describe the construction and use of all the different trumpets. This is very certain, that the Abipones have more trumpeters than soldiers in their armies. These terrible-sounding instruments they accompany with a savage howl, made by striking their lips with their hands.
726 When rushing to battle they cry aloud, *Laharàlk! Laharàlk!* Let us go, let us go; as the Guaranies say, *Yahà! Yahà!* and the Mocobios, *Zokolák! Zokolák!* Whilst the Abipones are in battle, they carry their eyes to every side of the